Rail Link with Myanmar

3801. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the' steps taken by Government on the recommendation of Shukla Commission regarding extension of Rail line along the Chindwin Valley, parallel to the Mizoram Manipur Border, to link with the main Yangaon—Mandalay rail system of Myanmar; and

(b) if so, by when the work would be taken up and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Recommendaitons of the Shukla Commission on the development of North Eastern States are taken into consideration while formulating Railways plans for the North Eastern Region. Providing connection between theYangon-Mandalay rail system of Myanmar and the Indian Railway system is a part of the proposal for the Southern corridor of Trans Asia Railway.

The proposal for developing a Railway Corridor is being pursued both under the aegis of Internation Union of Railways (UIC), Paris and UN-ESCAP, Bangkok. Ther proposed corridor seeks to link Europe/ CIS countries to Singapore/South East Asian countries via Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Bangaladesh and Myanmar. Ministry of Railways has been coordinating with UIC and UN-ESCAP to pool their efforts and resources for synergistic approach on the project.

The alignment proposed by UN-ESCAP in its recently submitted report on the route of the Southern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway from Kunming/ South of Bangkok to Kapikule (Bulgaria)/CIS countries passes through Myanmar into India. The report is under discussion by the member countries of UN-ESCAP. Since the project requires approval of all member countries, no time-frame can be given for its implementation.